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1961/09/07

TOP SECRET

FROM WASHINGTON TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Cypher/OTP

FOREIGN OFFICE (SECRET) AND
WHITEHALL (SECRET) DISTRIBUTION

Sir H. Caccia

No. 2327
September 7, 1961

D. 11.40 p.m. September 7, 1961
R. 12.14 a.m. September 8, 1961

IMMEDIATE
TOP SECRET

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 2327 of September 7.

Repeated for information to Bangkok, U.K.Mission Geneva, Paris, Canberra, Vientiane, Delhi, Singapore, Ottawa

and Saving to U.K.Mission New York, Karachi, Manila

Your telegram No. 6267: Laos.

I spoke accordingly to Mr. Rusk this morning.

2. Mr. Rusk told me that from Mr. Harriman's report of his conversations in London he had understood that we had raised no objection to contingency planning in case it proved impossible to carry through successfully the objective and plan set in Paris. He had noted the reservation that I had made two days ago (my telegram No. 2273), but had decided not to stay the instructions sent to the United States Ambassadors. His principal concern was with Thailand. He had not yet heard whether these instructions had been acted upon and it was possible that there might in fact be a delay for another day or two as he understood that Marshal Sarit was not in the capital. But even if it might be practicable, he really could not ask the United States Ambassador in Bangkok to hold his hand.

3. Mr. Rusk said he did not know what our reports were. The information reaching him was not at all encouraging about the internal situation in Thailand. He said that you could now scarcely afford to mention S.E.A.T.O. in Bangkok. In his view it was therefore urgent to do something to show that we were contemplating positive action, if we could not get an independent and neutral Laos through the line agreed upon in Paris.

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TOP SECRET

4. He admitted that the Thais might tell General Phoumi of the American approach and that the General might draw the wrong conclusions. But he said that he had been at pains to make sure that Phoumi was not in any doubt up to now and he could assure us that he would continue to look after this just so long as there was any hope in carrying through the Paris agreement. That remained the settled policy of the United States Government, so long as it was attainable.

5. Mr. Rusk said that he would let us know as soon as he had any reply from Marshal Sarit and that of course the United States Government did not consider that they were in any way bound to the contingency plan which they had mooted, until they knew and had considered the reactions of other countries. It went without saying that this included the United Kingdom.

Foreign Office please pass to Bangkok, Vientiane, U.K.Mission Geneva, Delhi, Paris, Singapore, Canberra and Saving to Karachi and Manila as my telegrams Nos. 164, 137, 103, 119, 515, 193, 109, 96 and 76.

[Not repeated to Vientiane pending Departmental decision. Repeated as requested to remainder: copies sent to Telegraph Section C.R.O. for repetition to Delhi and Canberra and Saving to Karachi].

ADVANCE COPIES
Private Secretary
Sir F. Hoyer Millar
Mr. Brain
Head of South East Asia Department
Head of P.U.S.D.

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